

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**March 8, 2007  
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Room 1 of the Arizona Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. MST.

## **1. Call to Order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman  
Dr. John Baracy  
Mr. Jim DiCello  
Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan  
Ms. Johanna Haver  
Ms. Eileen Klein  
Ms. Karen Merritt

Absent:

Dr. Eugene Garcia  
Ms. Anna Rosas

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Presentation and Discussion of the Development of English Language Learner Models' Components**

Mr. Kevin Clark, Senior Consultant with Clark Consulting and Training Inc., presented an overview to the Task Force for the adoption of Arizona's Structured English Immersion program model or models. Mr. Clark began by reviewing the circular SEI Program Model diagram that he presented at the February 23 meeting. The model consists of four program components: Policy; Principles; Structure; and Classroom Practices. Mr. Clark reviewed Arizona Revised Statutes § 15-751 through § 15-755, the primary statutory references that define Arizona's SEI program model(s). After the statutory review, Mr. Clark led the Task Force through a discussion of foundational principles. He stated that foundational principles are a critical element of the model because they articulate the Task Force's statements of belief underlying the law. Mr. Clark affirmed that if the Task Force is interested in a prescriptive model, foundational principles are necessary to combat assumptions that might be made about the law.

Mr. Alan Maguire explained that he has requested Mr. Clark and Aha! Inc., to assist the Task Force by reviewing all testimony from the Task Force meetings, examining all relevant state and federal statutes, and providing a program plan that would facilitate discussions and decisions by the Task Force.

Mr. Clark stated that several conclusions came from the testimony given by schools and districts. He found that the word “model” was used to describe methodology, teachers’ authorizations, structural materials, and other definitions. “Model” did not seem to be well defined. He referred to the circular SEI Program Model.

Policy component: Mr. Clark stated that Arizona’s policy has been established in statute.

Principles component: Mr. Clark said that in the Principles component, words need to be defined because educators bring their own assumptions and definitions, such as: how many years it takes for an ELL student to learn English, the definition of a model, or the definition of SEI. The Task Force establishment and endorsement of principles is the antidote to unchallenged assumptions.

Structure component: Mr. Clark defined the structure as the specifics of the model. The structure must comply with the structure established by Policy. He stated that many people were equating structure with model.

Classroom Practice component: The Task Force will need to decide how much the model will dictate instructional delivery methodology and English Language Development (ELD) content in the classroom.

Mr. Maguire commented that he had had presented the four components of the model to those attending the Practitioners of English Language Learners (PELL) meeting on Friday, March 2, 2007. He stated that educators seemed to understand the concepts behind the model. In reference to the circular diagram, Dr. John Baracy asked where resources would be placed as a component of a model. Mr. Clark responded that, in his opinion, resources were part of the structure and classroom practice components. Mr. Maguire stated that the Task Force should develop a model first and then examine the budget and costs of the model which would occur on a specialized level, outside the Task Force, at the local districts. Dr. Baracy stated that, in his opinion, examining resources was part of the Task Force’s assignment.

To elucidate the model, Mr. Clark converted the circular model into a linear structure. The linear structure also serves as an action plan, illustrating components of the SEI model which have been completed and components which require action by the Task Force. Mr. Clark discussed the linear diagram of tasks to be completed. He stated that there are eight parts of the diagram. Tasks that are completed are presented in green; tasks needing to be completed are presented in red. The first task is Policy. Policy is defined in current Arizona Revised Statutes, therefore, it is green. The second task, Principles, is red, and needs to be defined by the Task Force. Program Model, the third task, is presented in red and requires action by the Task Force. Tasks four, five, and six are in green indicating that these tasks have been completed. They are: the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA), Arizona Academic Standards, and the English Language (EL) Proficiency Standards. Task seven, SEI Discrete English Skills

Sequence, is in red and has not been completed. Task eight, Teachers and Students, is in green because teachers and students are in place.

Mr. Clark stated that the strength of the model is in the tight correlation between the AZELLA, the academic standards, and the ELL proficiency standards. He stated that the Task Force could take the English language skill progression within the proficiency standards and create a discrete curriculum for teachers and students to use in the classroom. This discrete English skills sequence would create uniformity among schools and districts so that every child would be learning a similar progression of skills.

Ms. Eileen Klein asked why the policy box was green. Mr. Clark stated the box is green because statutes have already been written, approved, and are in effect. He clarified that it is the Task Force's responsibility to further define the legal requirements through the development of principles. Mr. Clark stated that the components of the linear diagram incorporate students, teachers, parents, school board members, and the community at large. The SEI English Skill Sequence component addresses teachers' concerns about daily curriculum. The Policy component addresses community members' concerns.

Mr. Clark reviewed the four primary, prescriptive elements defined in A.R.S. § 15-751 through § 15-755. The SEI program model(s) which the Task Force develop(s) must conform to these statutory requirements:

- (1) Schools shall teach English
  - (2) All instruction and materials in English
  - (3) At least four hours per day of English language development.
  - (4) One year goal to teach ELL students English
- Two years of funding to achieve English proficiency

Ms. Klein asked if the four elements identified were based on an assumption that former H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006) was the only law that the Task Force needed to consider, or were there other laws which might have a bearing on these elements. Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan stated that H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006) was written to be aligned with the voter approved initiative, Proposition 203. Ms. Garcia Dugan further stated that three of the four elements identified by Mr. Clark, with the exception of the four hour ELD requirement, are from the Proposition 203 initiative which is now in statute. H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006) added the four-hour requirement. Mr. Maguire asked if anyone could think of any other laws that would contradict or oppose these elements, and he stressed that the Task Force should primarily concern itself with the statutes that incorporated H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006). Ms. Klein stated that the Task Force needed to ensure that no other laws are in conflict with the four elements, including Proposition 203.

Ms. Karen Merritt suggested the Task Force might want to further define what constitutes a year of instruction, whether it is a fiscal year or a school year. She also asked how the models adopted by the Task Force would address the second year of ELD instruction considering the provision for two years of funding. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that the Task Force is charged with

creating a model for SEI instruction that is not intended to exceed one year. Ms. Garcia Dugan commented that Proposition 203 used the language, “not normally to exceed one year,” and that Arizona Revised Statutes are consistent with Proposition 203. She stated that it was her understanding that “one year” was intended to mean one school year, and that if a student entered the school year late, the student would be funded beyond that school year. Mr. Maguire commented that the language “not normally to exceed one year” is the goal that guides how rigorous the model should be. Chairman Maguire stated that the operative words “not normally” to exceed one year squares with two year funding. The goal for most students is one year, but it is possible that the second year may be needed. Ms. Merritt stated that the idea of basing a curriculum on a prescribed day-to-day skill set would need to be adapted for students who arrive later during the school year. Mr. Clark stated, with discrete, day-to-day skill articulation, teachers would know exactly what a student has missed. Currently, because of the numerous curricula statewide, teachers may not know what transfer students have been taught if the students change schools during the year. Ms. Johanna Haver added that individual instructional pacing is a necessity to meet the needs of individual students.

Mr. Clark asked the Task Force if the four presented elements of the law could be endorsed. Ms. Klein repeated that she would like the Task Force to research other statutes, both state and federal, so that when a model is adopted, the Task Force can be confident that the model has no conflicts with any policy. Dr. Suzy Seibert of Aha! Inc. offered to show Proposition 203 to the Task Force and stated that H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006) did consider Proposition 203, including the definitions defined in Proposition 203, as well as other current policy, and revised statute. Mr. Clark clarified that his statutory review did not start with H.B. 2064 (Chapter 4, Laws 2006); he examined all current Arizona Revised Statutes concerning English Language Learners and ELL instruction. .

Mr. Clark expanded on the four policy elements and identified key foundational principles within the statutes. He defined a principle as a statement of belief which guides behavior and activity and explains conduct. Ms. Klein asked where resources would be addressed in the principles. Mr. Maguire suggested creating a fifth box to create the principles for funding and resources. The title could be “Resource Allocation” and could include fiscal responsibility and cost-effectiveness. Dr. Baracy suggested that, while the Task Force is in the process of creating the model that fits statutory requirements, the Task Force could also develop a list of suggestions for the legislature to examine and consider. Mr. Maguire agreed that creating a list for legislative consideration would be a good idea. He stated that he envisioned this exercise as over and above the assigned tasks of the Task Force, and that the legislature should be informed of things which the Task Force has learned.

Mr. Clark continued by presenting the draft handout of principles (Attachment A.) The *Draft Principles Underlying the Arizona Law* included four categories: Role of School, vis-à-vis ELL Students; Learning; English and Academic Content; and Teaching. Mr. Clark presented two identified principles under the Role of School, vis-à-vis ELL Students category. These principles are: public schools have a responsibility to prepare students for employment and/or further academic pursuits; and public schools in Arizona have a responsibility to teach the

English language to non-native English speakers. Under the Learning category, seven principles were presented for consideration. They were:

1. Language-ability based grouping optimizes rapid language learning. This principle captures the statutory preference of grouping ELL students by language proficiency.
2. The rate and depth of English learning correlates positively to time spent learning English. This principle correlates to the minimum four hours of ELD instruction stated in statute.
3. Time on task increases academic progression. This is probably the most time-tested principle, agreed upon by most educational practitioners.
4. Children can learn English far more rapidly than we ever thought possible. This principle is implied by the creation of the one year time frame. Dr. Baracy was not sure that the law implied this principle.

Mr. Clark presented two principles under the “English and Academic Content” category. The first principle was that English is fundamental to content area mastery. This principle is supported by the federal case law of *Castañeda v. Pickard* and is accepted by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) when OCR monitors schools. This case law states that there are two options for teaching ELL students. Option one: the student can be grouped by proficiency and taught English to a suitable level before joining mainstream content area classes, which is a sequential mode of teaching. Option two: a student can be taught both English and academic content simultaneously, such as in a bi-lingual model. Mr. Clark stated that Arizona’s statutes reflect the underlying principle of sequential learning by focusing on grouping ELL students by language proficiency and by intensive English instruction for the first year so that ELL students can become proficient and then master content-specific subjects.

Mr. Clark then presented the two principles in the fourth category, “Teaching.” The first principle states that language-ability based grouping optimizes teachers’ instructional planning and lesson delivery. The second principle states that certain English language teaching methods accelerate language learning better than others.

After review the entire draft principles handout, Mr. Clark asked if Task Force members wanted to make any changes. Ms. Merritt requested that the domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking be added as part of English. She also asked that the grouping of ELL students apart from mainstream classrooms be addressed more clearly. Ms. Garcia Dugan said that the word “transfer” in the law implies separate classes for ELL students and native English/proficient English speaking students. Dr. Baracy wanted the record to state that the practices are limited within the law as far as which teaching methods may be used. Mr. Maguire reiterated that the principles reflected the beliefs and values of the individuals who drafted the law, not necessarily any other person’s principles.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

Mr. Clark asked the Task Force if they agreed upon these principles with the suggested edits. He stated that the next step will be researching other laws and statutes including NCLB and

Proposition 203 and determining if there are any other considerations which need to be made by the Task Force. At the next meeting, Mr. Clark will present the edits to the principles to be endorsed. Once the principles are endorsed, the Task Force can begin creating the structure of the model.

#### **4. Call to the Public**

Mr. Alan Maguire made the call to the public at 3:22pm. Mr. Salvatore Gabaldon spoke to the Task Force. He thanked the members for their efforts and told them that schools are urgently awaiting the models so that funds can be budgeted. He urged the Task Force to consider that a definition of the four hours of English language instruction already exists. Mr. Gabaldon stated that there are other laws which will impact the Task Force's decisions, including the Flores Consent Order. He stated that it is his understanding that a stipulation under the Flores Consent Order states that English language instruction would include reading, writing, listening, speaking, and cognitive and academic development in English. The curriculum shall include the academic standards approved by the State Board of Education in a comparable amount and scope to English-proficient students. He said that this is a broader definition than the Task Force has heard from other presenters.

In addition, Mr. Gabaldon pointed out that in the draft of the principles, the principle of English proficiency being antecedent to and foundational for meaningful participation in rigorous core content was untrue, and that if it were considered true by the law, then there was little reason for the SEI endorsements in content areas, including nine hours of SIOP training which can be selected by teachers of content areas who may have non-proficient ELL students. In addition, he stated that the statement "certain English language teaching methods accelerate language learning better than others" was only partially true, because not all students learn best with the same method. He asked the Task Force to consider these considerations when developing their models.

#### **5. Discussion of future meetings**

The next Task Force meeting will be held on March 14, 2007, at 1:30 p.m.

#### **6. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.

**Arizona ELL Task Force**

Alan Maguire, Chairman  
April 12, 2007